

Remarks

Claims 61-120 are pending in the present application. By the present amendment, Claims 61, 63, 105, 117 and 119-120 have been amended. **Claim 118 was canceled in the previous response. This cancellation appears to have been overlooked.** No new matter has been entered.

As is explained in the Office Action of December 18, 2006, the rejections of independent claims 61, 63, 105, 117 and 119-120 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) have been maintained. According to the Office Action, "the right side of ridge 50 and the left side of ridge 52" define the pair of cladding containment regions recited in the claims. Applicants appreciate this point of clarification and have further amended the independent claims to recite that "each of said pair of cladding containment regions is defined between distinct pairs of opposing side walls." This structure is clearly illustrated in the originally-filed drawings of the present application. Applicants respectfully submit that Erben et al. does not teach or suggest cladding containment regions of this nature and could not properly support an anticipatory or obviousness rejection of the presently pending claims.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicants submit that the application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned to resolve efficiently any formal matters or to discuss any aspects of the application or of this response. Otherwise, early notification of allowable subject matter is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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